

Minutes of the Regular Meeting  
Of the Lima/Allen County Regional Transit Authority Board of Trustees  
Held at the RTA Administration Building  
200 East High St., Lima, Ohio  
August 6, 2019 @ 12:00 PM

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Present were Brad Taylor, President; Joan Davis, Vice-President; Joshua Parker, Holly Rex, Richard Schroeder, David Stratton, and Scott Cockerell, Board Members; Shelia Haney, Executive Director; Karen Garland, Operations Director; Brian Wildermuth, Superintendent; Lori McGuire, Uplift Supervisor; Marlene Shumaker, RPC; and Teresa Brown, Board Secretary/Treasurer. Guests: Doug Olsen, Greater Lima Region; Michael Hayden, Big Brothers/Big Sisters and former ACRTA Board President. Employees: Dawn Roberts, Elliot Rankin, John Riemann, Stan Kasler, Jakob Robinson, Kerri Rockhill, John Howell, and Mary Jane Donnelly.

First Item of Business – Roll Call: Roll Call was taken and noted for the minutes. All members were present.

Second Item of Business – Approval of Previous Board Minutes: Ms. Davis made a motion to approve the previous minutes. Ms. Rex seconded the motion and all members voted in favor thereof.

Third Item of Business – Board President’s Comments: Mr. Taylor had no comments at this time.

Fourth Item of Business – Guest Speakers:

Mr. Doug Olsson, the new President of Greater Lima Region, was introduced. Greater Lima Region is a 501c (3) non-profit organization made up of a consortium of businesses that are members of the GLR. They make strategic investments in particular economic projects in the region. They provide private sector funding for the Allen Economic Development Group. AEDG is a public/private partnership partially funded by the commissioners, partially by the City, and partially private sector. An example of a project GLR would assist is Rotary is trying to construct an amphitheater downtown and GLR may help back the project either financially or logistically. This helps bring a level of excitement and enthusiasm downtown. AEDG is trying to grow jobs in the region and it is important to the region so GLR will continue to support them.

Michael Hayden: Mr. Hayden was on the Board from 2008 – 2018. He served as President and Vice-President during his time. Michael is speaking today on the behalf of the proposal for Shelia to continue as the Executive Director. There were numerous issues during that time revolving around being underfunded. At least three times they had begun to discuss closure. There had been several directors, and some were good, and some were not so good. Shelia came here initially with First Transit. She far out distances any of the other directors with knowledge and management ability. She is a community resource that is very valuable to the Board and the community. The board should not let a resource like that go. If it were up to him, he would be doing everything in his power to make sure we retained everything she brings to the community. Just getting the levy passed was huge. He hoped we would do all that we could to make sure that she stays.

Leslie Rigali: Leslie first had a statement from Tracy Sanchez, President of Lima Pallett. Tracy wanted to express her strong opinion on how instrumental Shelia is in the future success of RTA. Her commitment to RTA, business relationships, service to the community and her dedication to keep ACRTA viable in our community are so important. She has been instrumental in



collaborating with business and community leaders to keep Lima moving forward. She brings a wealth of talent, experience, competency, and integrity to her position. She has kept a level mind and even head. She has integrated herself in the Lima Community. She bought a house, volunteers, and is passionate about what she does for ACRTA. She was instrumental in the yes vote for the levy and in educating the public on what RTA does. Sheila has saved RTA money over the years and to find someone with her experience and dedication in this day and age would not be easy. Please consider Shelia's contract renewal as an important step in moving Lima forward.

From Leslie Rigali personally: The last time Leslie came to our agency it was as a community volunteer to help with our campaign. She now comes to us as a concerned citizen. Before she helped with the levy, she vetted the agency and was skeptical due to all the funding issues. She thought there was no hope for saving public transport in Lima. Leslie met Shelia and could sense her passion and optimism. Leslie spent time at the agency with the staff and heard stories about how the business had been revitalized and was offering services to every corner of the county. Businesses told her how vital RTA was to their success. The determination and leadership of this one woman breathed new life and possibilities into RTA. She forged relationships with businesses and told the RTA story like an evangelist. Her tenacity and strength, which were always focused on what was best for her staff, what was best for RTA, what was best for Allen County, contributed to a successful turnaround story. She accomplished what no other Director was able to, securing designated funding which will bring in between 16 and 20 million over the next ten years. She came in on her own time and used her own money to paint the walls in the transfer Station and her office, to do landscaping, to provide a coffeemaker and a toaster oven for the employee breakroom. She works to find every grant she can to provide for the agency and digs in her own pocket over and over. Shelia volunteers with the Big Brothers Big Sisters, CASA, and is a member of Kiwanis and until recently a member of Rotary. She gives rides to stranded Greyhound riders, rides and assistance to regular RTA riders, and contributes to nearly every school and community fundraiser that comes along. As a former employer, Leslie feels compelled to tell us that you treat exceptional employees like that like gold. The Board are the stewards, they hired this outstanding woman to handle the day-to-day operations of RTA. They should be proud of their decision to do so as RTA is in good, reliable, competent hands. Her contract proposal is not only fair but is less than she deserves, given her education, experience, and success here at RTA. If you fail this exceptional leader, you fail the entire Allen County Community.

Dawn Roberts: Dawn has been a dispatcher here for 12 years. Her letter is on behalf of all the Administrative Staff who has signed this letter. The staff values and knows the importance of Shelia as the Executive Director. When she came 5 years ago it was obvious, she had a vast knowledge of Transit, FTA and ADA regulations. She downsized from working at a larger agency to our small urban. The drivers were in the process of joining a union when she came, and she was thrown into Union negotiations. She met with all the staff to learn what they do and see what their personal goals, challenges, and vision were for RTA. She restructured the organizational chart to put people in positions where they can flourish. We were facing a financial hardship at the time and Shelia knew we needed to establish dedicated funding. After 3 years of campaigning we won the levy. Shelia personally put in long hours and attended many meetings and events to promote the levy and educate the public. The drivers recently decided to decertify the union, as it was not beneficial, and they could get further with Shelia's open-door policy. They have since formed a Driver's Committee to meet with management. This truly reflects on the Leadership of Shelia. We ask the Board to give her a fair and reasonable proposal to secure her position as Executive Director.

Mary Jane Donnelly: Jane has been a Driver here on and off for 23 years. She is here on behalf of the drivers who has also signed the letter. She has been through a lot of directors and there has



never been anyone with as big a heart as Shelia. The drivers understand that today is the day the Board makes their decision on the Executive Director proposal for employment. The drivers cannot express enough how disappointed they would be if Shelia were not their leader. They decertified their union, AFSCME, which will save ACRTA \$60,000 a year in legal fees and negotiations, because of their trust in Shelia and her Leadership. She has always been fair and kept the team together when they were wondering if they would still have jobs. She kept RTA alive. The employees withdrew from the union, but Jane said she could not guarantee that would be the case without Shelia's Leadership. The drivers hope the Board of Trustees does what is best for RTA and will do everything in their power to keep Shelia at RTA. It would be a great loss to Allen County and the RTA if she were to leave.

**Karen Garland:** Karen is the Operations Director and has been here for 8 months. Previously she served as the Transportation Director at Allen County Board of Developmental Disabilities for 10 years. They contracted with RTA for transportation services during many of those years. The leadership at RTA was substandard and had great turnover, seven directors in ten years. Prior to Shelia's arrival, Karen was convinced RTA would be closing sooner rather than later. Things started to turn around after her arrival and it was obvious Shelia was 100% dedicated to saving RTA and providing public transit to Allen County. For the past two and a half years, first from the outside then from working here, she has watched Shelia give her heart and soul to RTA and the community. She drives people to work, to church, and on a recent occasion drove someone to Upper Sandusky when RTA was unable to take the trip. She was non-stop vigilant to get the levy passed even after the first attempt failed. She would speak to anyone in the community that would listen to ensure the levy would pass and the service would continue. Karen stated this community, RTA, and RTA's employees need Shelia and no one knows the bulk impact she has had. It will be a sad day for ACRTA if Shelia were to leave and she was not sure RTA could survive without her and her dedication and knowledge of FTA regulations. The staff and Karen support her proposal and ask the Board to make every effort to secure Shelia and accept her proposal.

**Mayor Berger:** He just wanted to make a few comments for the Board on Shelia's behalf. He understood there was discussion on the contract for the Executive Director. He has had a positive experience working with her, starting with several years ago. The Mayor, Shelia, and Thom Mazur had been looking at workplace related transportation issues. They were actively looking to see if it was possible to have Uber type service with dispatching capabilities here at RTA. They met around 30 times over a couple year period to see what was in the marketplace, what technologies could be developed here, and funding mechanisms. He became a lot more knowledgeable about the complexities of running this place, with the regulation's RTA must operate under. He worked on the first levy effort somewhat due to running his own campaign at the time but was heavily involved in the second attempt. The team that came together the second time was vital and only through Shelia's dedication, passion and drive was it put together. He was not sure what was going through the Board's mind as far as compensation, but in his view, Shelia has earned every penny of a good pay package. She puts herself out there in ways that were unusual and courageous, and served RTA and the community and will for the long term. He urged the Board would act in a way that would retain her in our community.

**Fifth Item of Business – Steering Committee (Operations for June and Survey):** The Steering Committee met in July on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. They discussed the Operations Survey the Marketing Manager did. It was included in the Board packet. We will be doing a series of surveys, this one is just a guideline for now. So far, the passengers would like Saturday services back first, then evenings and then the routes that were cut. This will be after the levy money starts coming in 2020 and we see what we can do with the money. Shelia was surprised by the results as she thought they would like the evenings back first for job access. This survey was given to existing riders, so that is one of the



reasons we will do more surveys, to make sure what the entire community would like to see. The committee talked about some other things that were on the agenda but there was nothing to bring the Board for a motion. The attendees at the Steering Committee meeting were Joan Davis, David Stratton and Holly Rex.

Sixth Item of Business – Project Committee (Parking Project): The Project Committee did not have a meeting in July as there is no movement on the current projects. Any emails Shelia has received on projects she has forwarded to Mr. Cockerell. They are working on getting the survey done for the Parking lot. The three buses that we have been talking about for two years are going into production on September 10<sup>th</sup>. There was nothing to bring to the Board for a motion.

Seventh Item of Business – Finance Committee (Finance Report & Reconciliations): The Finance Committee met on the 30<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Schroeder and Mr. Parker are on the committee. Bob Ruzinsky was at the meeting also and answered all the questions the Board Members had. The Finance Report and the Reconciliations were looked over. Mr. Parker said Bob has been a good resource and helpful at cleaning up a mess. The finances shown we are at a loss of about \$12,000 after depreciation is backed out. He showed them his ratios that show we are staying consistent which is a good thing. Mr. Schroeder added Bob had warned them RTA will not look good financially until we start receiving the levy money. Shelia said Bob said the negative was due to not having school contracts during the summer and when they pick back up our cash flow should even out.

Mr. Cockerell asked how much longer we would have Bob's services as he has other commitments. Mr. Schroeder said Bob is reemployed with Dayton so he should be available for at least the next six months and for the foreseeable future. Mr. Parker thinks we need to keep him on as a resource. Bob is weaning the hours he spends here down since he has most of the things resolved that were not in the form that FTA would want. He will be here at least once a month.

Eighth Item of Business – Motion – (Finance Report & Reconciliations): Mr. Schroeder made a motion to accept the Finance Report Bob had presented and Mr. Parker seconded the motion. All members voted in favor thereof.

Ninth Item of Business – Motion – Executive Director Position: Mr. Stratton said he wanted to thank the people who came, and he appreciated their comments. It is a challenging situation and he heard the Mayor say, "good pay package" and that seemed to be the bottom line about what the conversation was about. The Board has a challenge and he always said they are thankful for all Shelia has done. There was a sense that maybe the Board has not shown a certain level of appreciation that had been felt. He wanted to dispute that, and he has tried to communicate that. They now have the challenge of the levy passing and coming up with what does that look like. There can be an error on one side or the other on a compensation package. It can be said it is too little or too much. There has been extreme support from the Board for Shelia. They want her here but must balance their idea of being fiscally responsible. They do not want a combative spirit, they want what is the greater good for Shelia and the Lima community. Ms. Davis commented she wanted Shelia here. Ms. Davis has been on the Board for nine years and she saw what it was like before Shelia and it was not good.



Tenth Item of Business – Executive Session: Ms. Rex made a motion to enter Executive Session to discuss the Executive Director position with the RTA. Ms. Davis seconded the motion. Roll call: Scott – yes, Dick – no, Holly – yes, Brad – yes, Josh – yes, Josh – yes, Joan – yes, Dave – yes.

Ms. Davis made a motion to return from Executive Session and Ms. Rex seconded the motion. Roll call: Scott – yes, Dick – yes, Holly – yes, Brad – yes, Joan – yes, Josh – yes. Mr. Stratton left during the Executive Session.

Mr. Schroeder made a motion that the Board reaffirm its intent to have a Full-Time Director as an employee with a salary and benefits that will be shared by the President with the current contract Director as an opportunity for that individual to accept that position with the request that the decision be made as quickly as possible. Ms. Rex seconded the motion and all members voted in favor thereof.

Eleventh Item of Business – Adjourn: Mr. Schroeder made a motion to adjourn and Mr. Cockerell seconded the motion. All members voted in favor thereof. Meeting adjourned at 2:15 pm.

The next monthly Board Meeting will be held September 3rd, 2019 at 12:00 Noon.

  
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Brad Taylor, Board President  
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Teresa Brown, Board Secretary/Treasurer